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The Quiet Code: The Life and Career of Jermar D. Belen

Born in a small town in the Philippines, he entered the world quietly, unaware of the future he would carve—not through privilege, but through perseverance, curiosity, and a lifelong love for technology.

Early Years: Discovery Begins (Birth-2000)

Growing up in a small town, he began his formal education at a young age. A quiet, observant child, he often found himself tinkering with household electronics, asking questions that few around him could answer. His early school life was unremarkable on the surface, but internally, a restless mind was beginning to awaken.

By 2000, during his early high school years, he was already shaping his identity amid the turbulence of adolescence. To support his studies, he sold street food after class—long, exhausting days that taught him resilience and determination. Around this time, he also discovered heavy music, which became both his refuge and release, echoing the struggles and dreams of a boy learning to survive and define himself.

Digital Awakening: From Curiosity to Code (2002-2007)

In 2002, he discovered computer gaming—not just as a form of entertainment, but as a window into the digital world. Modding games and exploring the World Wide Web transitioned into an interest in web design, which he pursued independently by 2003—long before web development became a common skill.

By 2004, he entered university full of promise, but not without challenges. The following year brought financial hardship. College almost slipped out of reach, but he refused to give in.

Driven by necessity and passion, he began learning the popular PHP-MySQL combo in late 2007 and eventually turned it into a side hustle, building websites for friends, local businesses, and anyone willing to take a chance on a quiet, young computer programmer with dreams.

Creative Rebellion and Career Shift (2008–2009)

In 2008, he was recruited by a local band as its guitarist and drummer for other bands. Music became therapy—a way to express what words couldn't. At the same time, his computer programming skills were growing. After years of juggling studies, gigs, and freelance projects, he made a difficult choice: to drop out of university and pursue full-time freelance web development.

By 2009, his growing reputation as a freelancer led to an opportunity with a business process outsourcing subcontractor, where he became part of his first professional team. It was a shift from working alone to working with others, a challenge he embraced with humility and discipline.

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Growth and Grounding (2010–2013)

After a brief stint with one subcontractor, he transferred to another in 2010, sharpening his collaborative skills and adapting to client-driven development cycles. Then, in 2011, he took a defining step toward purpose-driven work, entering the world of public service by joining the government's ICT unit as a computer programmer. This move marked the beginning of a new chapter, where his skills would serve not just systems, but people. That same year, he developed the Document Tracking System (DENR) and several other systems that streamlined internal processes—early signs of his growing focus on building practical solutions with lasting impact.

In 2012, always eager to learn, he began diving into mobile development, embracing the mobile revolution and experimenting with jailbreaking, rooting, flashing custom ROMs, and creating Android apps.

2013 was a pivotal year: he finally earned his university degree in Bachelor of Science in Information Technology, closed the chapter with his band, and welcomed the birth of his daughter. Returning home, no longer a boy chasing dreams, but a man shaped by purpose and responsibility, he stepped into a new season of life grounded in family, community, and quiet ambition.

A Humble Climb: Analyst, Father, Builder (2015–2020)

In 2015, he transitioned to a permanent role in the government sector as an Information Systems Analyst. Though the work was complex, he approached it with humility and precision, contributing to key information systems in the region.

One notable milestone came in 2016 with the development of the DENR4B Portal (https://denr4bportal.github.io), a project that showcased his ability to deliver meaningful digital solutions for public access and transparency. The portal included systems such as a document action tracking system, online attendance management system, and online permitting system, along with a growing number of online information systems.

2017 brought the birth of his son, and with it, a new wave of professional and personal challenges. But as always, he adapted. In 2018, he earned another certification in Cisco networking devices, further strengthening his technical foundation and broadening his skill set.

By 2019, driven by a blend of technical expertise and entrepreneurial drive, he established a small computer business. It wasn't flashy, but it was honest work—built on trust, grit, and reputation.

Then came 2020. The world shut down due to the COVID-19 pandemic. While many struggled to transition, he adapted quickly to the work-from-home life. Already used to isolation from years of freelancing, he found a rhythm—balancing his role in government ICT and managing his small business.

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Legacy in Progress

Today, he continues to be a quiet force in the world of software development, a humble innovator driven not by recognition, but by purpose.

From his humble beginnings to his work as an information systems analyst, and from his passion for music to his entrepreneurial and mentorship efforts, his journey reflects a deep, ongoing commitment to service through technology. Over the years, he has focused on crafting meaningful information systems and applications—tools that empower small businesses, enable grassroots organizations, and support individuals often overlooked by mainstream tech.

His growing body of work can be explored through his personal website (https://jermarbelen.github.io), a personal space where he shares his projects, experiments, and contributions to the open-source world. Guided by his passion for technology and the open web, he has consistently dedicated his time and skills to a wide range of open-source initiatives on GitHub. Over the years, this commitment to collaboration and innovation naturally evolved into something bigger: the founding of the OpenWeb Foundation—a platform built to promote open standards, empower developers, and nurture a thriving, sustainable open-source ecosystem. What began as a personal pursuit became a shared mission—proof that even small contributions, made consistently, can grow into something with lasting impact.

His legacy is not marked by viral moments or grand headlines, but by the daily impact of thoughtful, dependable solutions. He proves that innovation doesn't need fanfare—and that some of the most lasting contributions are built quietly, line by line, for those who need them most.

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